



General Assembly

Sixtieth session

Official Records

First Committee

11th meeting

Thursday, 13 October 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Choi (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 85 to 105 (continued)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: We shall now proceed with our thematic discussion on the subject of conventional weapons. Since we have no guest speakers for this morning, I will give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements on that subject.

Mr. Lezona (Congo) (spoke in French): My delegation is pleased to address this meeting devoted to a subject that includes the question of small arms and light weapons.

The illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons poses a genuine threat to international peace and security, inter alia by fuelling conflict and destabilizing whole regions throughout world. Every year, small arms and light weapons take hundreds of human lives. Indeed, if we evaluate the long-term damage caused by this scourge of humanity over the long term, we would be justified in calling these arms weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, they are responsible for profoundly traumatizing and instilling fear in innocent civilian populations, victims of armed conflict. Those fears are furthered stoked by armed gangs, who carry out unspeakable acts of violence as they commit flagrant and serious human

rights violations such as rape, theft, torture and summary execution.

The Congolese Government is very concerned by the persistence of such evils in the Central African subregion. With a view to implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eliminate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, it is beginning implementation of its own programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. That is one of the main concerns of the Government, whose development programme is designed to curb the illicit circulation of more than 42,000 arms and to reintegrate more than 25,000 ex-combatants in order to consolidate the restored peace.

In that context, a Government-financed emergency programme for demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants was carried out in the Department of Pool from June to August 2005, costing a total of 250 million CFA francs. That has made it possible to collect and destroy 910 small arms and 3,682 items of ammunition, and to reintegrate 450 ex-combatants. My Government intends to continue its efforts by shortly launching disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants with the support of the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and with help from other bilateral and multilateral partners.

Furthermore, we welcome the General Assembly's creation of an Open-ended Working Group

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that was able to negotiate and achieve consensus on a draft international instrument to enable states to identify and trace in a timely and reliable manner illicit small arms and light weapons, in accordance with resolution 58/241 of 23 December 2003. My delegation earnestly hopes that the General Assembly will adopt the draft international instrument during this session.

The Republic of the Congo, which is a sponsor of two draft resolutions respectively entitled, "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them", document A/C.1/60/L.37, and "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", to be issued as document A/C.1/60/L.57, and we call for the adoption of those draft resolutions, which provide us with appropriate strategies to eliminate the illicit trade in small arms.

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum member States with Missions to the United Nations, namely Australia, Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Tonga, Vanuatu and my own country, Papua New Guinea.

The members of the Pacific Islands Forum remain firmly committed to the Programme of Action on Small Arms and to its effective implementation. The countries of the Pacific know only too well the significant costs and destabilizing impact of the uncontrolled flow of small arms and light weapons.

Pacific Island countries are encouraged by the progress this year at the international level on small arms and light weapons. We welcome the entry into force of the Protocol on firearms to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the successful conclusion of negotiations on a draft marking and tracing instrument, both of which will serve to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. While the draft marking and tracing instrument is not all that we might have hoped for, it represents a significant step towards the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action and deserves the First Committee's consensus support to ensure its effective implementation.

At the regional level, we are moving forward on the United Nations Programme of Action. The Pacific Islands Forum Model Weapons Control Bill, developed within the Nadi Framework, continues to be

implemented, but we recognize that more work is required in this area.

Stockpile management and security also remain a focus for the region and, with assistance from Australia and New Zealand, real improvements have been made in this area. Seven new armouries have been constructed for the Papua New Guinea Defence Forces at a cost of \$2.3 million. New armouries have been built for the Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru and Samoan police forces. Existing facilities were upgraded in Vanuatu, and there are plans for more armouries and magazines to be built for the Republic of Fiji military forces and for the Tuvalu police force. Early next year, New Zealand will host a firearms safety seminar for Pacific Island participants, and there are also plans to provide Tonga with training assistance in ammunition disposal and handling.

The Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), which comprises civilian and military components from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Samoa and Tuvalu, working closely with the Solomon Islands Government, continues to make excellent progress, as was recognized earlier this year by the positive report of the Pacific Islands Forum Eminent Persons Group. In its two years of operation, RAMSI has restored law and order and reduced crime. More than 3,600 weapons, including modern automatic and semi-automatic weapons, pistols, shotguns and homemade weapons, and 306,700 rounds of ammunition have been seized or surrendered. In response to community demands, the Solomon Islands National Peace Council is continuing to operate its successful Weapons-Free Village campaign. The National Peace Council provides trauma counselling, mediation, conflict resolution and reconciliation services, peacebuilding initiatives, community education and support for traditional systems of governance. It also conducts training programmes for provincial peace monitors.

In Papua New Guinea, the gun summit, held at Goroka in July, proposed limits on the ownership of guns after the Papua New Guinea Government's Gun-Control Committee conducted cross-country consultations. Australia generously provided \$300,000 in direct funding for the gun summit, and the recommendations of the summit are currently before the Papua New Guinea Cabinet.

The Bougainville Peace Agreement culminated in 2003 in a resolution by the parties that collected weapons would be destroyed and that Bougainville should be weapons-free. In May 2005, the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville declared the weapons disposal programme completed and verified that the situation on Bougainville was conducive to holding elections. This is a significant measure of the success of the Bougainville peace process, which involved truce monitors from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Vanuatu. The peaceful elections for the first Autonomous Government of Bougainville, successfully held in May and June of this year, were a momentous event in the process of establishing and consolidating a permanent peace on Bougainville.

The members of the Pacific Island Forum look forward next year to reviewing progress made in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action.

Mr. Freeman (United Kingdom): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and all the countries which have aligned themselves with this statement.

Last month, world leaders stressed in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) the negative effects of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. As we set out in our general statement, the EU believes that easy access to small arms and light weapons exacerbates conflicts, facilitates violent crime and terrorism, impedes post-conflict reconstruction and undermines long-term sustainable development. Small arms and light weapons have been the most instrumental factor in the regional conflicts that, since 1990, have cost the lives of almost 4 million people and have forced over 18 million people to leave their homes or their countries. The European Union is convinced that there is much still to be done to tackle this scourge. To that end, we are currently drafting our own strategy to combat the illicit accumulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, which will complement the United Nations Programme of Action.

On the Programme of Action, a lot of work still remains to be done regarding its implementation and strengthening in particular areas. We look forward to an ambitious and forward-looking Review Conference in 2006, and we would welcome the early identification of Chairpersons both for the Review

Conference and for the Preparatory Committee. We hope for close consultation in New York and Geneva and stress the importance of strong representation from States. To this end, we welcome a sponsorship programme within the United Nations Development Programme.

The EU welcomes the hard work done by the Open-ended Working Group on marking and tracing under the chairmanship of Ambassador Anton Thalmann. However, it is regrettable that no operational provisions on ammunition and peacekeeping operations were included, and that the draft instrument is not legally binding. It is, however, an important step in implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action. In that sense, it represents a positive signal from the international community to those countries most affected by this scourge. If it is applied by States with the necessary political will, the content of the draft instrument will help to discourage, and thus reduce, the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. We hope that it can be strengthened at further review meetings. The EU will be strongly committed to promoting further the issue of ammunition, thus taking up the recommendations of the Chairman's procedural report.

Brokering and transfer controls are a high priority for the EU. Illicit brokering and trafficking are recognized as among the main factors fuelling the illegal global trade. The EU was among those that insisted on the inclusion in last year's First Committee draft resolution, adopted as resolution 59/86, of a mandate to establish a group of governmental experts on illicit brokering. This group should be convened as soon as possible after the 2006 Programme of Action Review Conference and should be mandated to examine the feasibility of developing an international instrument to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition.

On transfer controls, the EU encourages the use of minimum common standards, including criteria or guidelines to determine authorization for transfer, so as to prevent small arms and light weapons from being diverted and used to fuel conflict, repress human rights and undermine development. Many other groups have joined the EU in calling for increased cooperation on transfer controls within the framework of the Programme of Action. We welcome recent progress made on transfer controls in Central America, the

region of the Common Market of the South, the Caribbean, the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa. We strongly encourage these and other regions and individual States to voice support for the further elaboration of common principles for transfer controls, so that such principles could be considered further in preparation for the 2006 Review Conference. The EU also underlines the importance of supporting the ongoing work on end-user certificates with a view to agreeing, in the long term, in the United Nations framework, upon a consensus on general principles on end-user certificates and best practices in the verification of the recipient.

But EU members have not just implemented agreements, important as that is. The EU is tackling the problem at the grass-roots level. From 2003 to date, in addition to national contributions from member States, the European Union has allocated €88 million for action undertaken by affected countries to deal with the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons. The EU has become one of the foremost international actors in efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. EU member States are committed to a continued leading role in this area and call on others to maintain momentum on the implementation of the Programme of Action in the coming years.

Furthermore, the EU was encouraged by the expansion of the scope of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms to include man-portable air defence systems and welcomed moves to encourage reporting on all small arms and light weapons as part of voluntary background information. The EU considers that the time is now ripe for small arms and light weapons to be reflected fully within the scope of the Register and encourages the next review of the Register's scope and operation to address this as a priority. The EU would see this as an important step towards maintaining the relevance of the Register as a practical instrument, unique in the area of conventional arms, and to complement the broad-based work being undertaken through the Programme of Action.

It is recognized that easy availability of small arms and light weapons and high levels of armed violence act as a major barrier to sustainable development. It is important to take this issue forward, notably in view of attention given by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, the Secretary-General and the world summit outcome

document to the link between security and development. In this respect, the EU calls on States and development agencies to increase their capacity to control the supply of small arms, lower the demand for these weapons and reduce levels of armed violence.

Progress on this issue should be reflected through more resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action in developing countries. Such support will be more effective because it will be tied to long-term development needs. We can also build on progress made at the United Nations summit. The new Peacebuilding Commission could systematically incorporate into its work measures to regulate small arms and light weapons and to improve training in weapons-management procedures.

In the wider context of the need to control the undesirable proliferation of conventional weapons, the EU is supportive of calls for an international agreement on the arms trade. Such a new comprehensive instrument should be based on universally accepted norms and standards. The EU encourages other States and regions to engage in discussions and to express their support for action in this area.

The use of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) by terrorists and non-State actors as a tool for threatening civil aviation, as well as aviation involved in peacekeeping operations, warrants worldwide attention and immediate action. MANPADS are extremely lethal, easily concealable and inexpensive. In this respect, the EU firmly supports broader efforts, in various multilateral forums, focusing in particular on export controls, including the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Group of Eight initiative to internationalize controls.

European Union member States have been working with other States in the field of MANPADS destruction and stockpile and security management, and will continue to work proactively to help those States not in a position to do so to secure their stockpiles and to destroy surpluses of those weapons. The EU encourages other States, insofar as they are able, to participate actively in stockpile and security management and destruction activities to help guard against further illicit use.

The EU welcomes progress achieved in universalizing the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Treaty, destroying stockpiled anti-personnel mines, clearing

mined areas and assisting victims. The EU considers the First Review Conference, which took place in Nairobi last year, to have been a landmark success that provided the international community with an opportunity both to assess and reflect on the progress that has been made on the path to a mine-free world and to refocus our efforts on achieving that goal. In order to overcome the remaining challenges to the full implementation of the Convention, the Nairobi Conference agreed on an ambitious Action Plan for the next five years, to which the EU is fully committed.

Building on that success, the EU welcomes the world's appeal to the parties to the Mine Ban Treaty to fully implement their commitments, as well as to all States that are in a position to do so to provide greater technical assistance to mine-affected States. We call upon all States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Mine Ban Treaty as soon as possible.

The European Union has provided assistance to affected States and communities, and will continue to do so. From 2003 to date, European Union member States and the European Community have allocated €384 million for mine action. Speaking on behalf of the European Union, we would like to point to the European Community's Strategy — in particular its Strategy for 2005-2007 — which, in the light of an interim target of zero new victims, seeks to reduce the threat of landmines on the ground and in stockpiles by offering social, economic and medical assistance to local populations affected and to the victims of landmines. The European Union as a whole will continue to support humanitarian mine action focused on the poorest countries. We will continue to work to improve the effectiveness of the international mine action system.

Finally, the European Union is looking forward to a constructive sixth meeting of States parties, to be held in Zagreb later this year. At that meeting, which will be taking place in a mine-affected country in Europe, we believe that it will be important to measure the progress achieved so far in pursuing the Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009, and therefore welcome the initiative to elaborate a Zagreb progress report.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) is an important and influential instrument of international and humanitarian law restricting the use of certain types of weaponry. The year 2003 saw the adoption of a fifth Protocol, on

explosive remnants of war, which we hope will soon enter into force. The EU attaches great importance to that Protocol and is pleased to note that, out of the 11 of the 20 ratifications needed, nine are either EU members or associated countries. The EU calls upon all States parties to ratify and implement the Protocol as soon as possible and to report on their progress in ratification.

The CCW is focused at present on the serious humanitarian, development and economic concerns posed by the irresponsible use of mines other than anti-personnel mines. Reliable reports from humanitarian organizations and non-governmental organizations working in conflict zones, as well as from States, highlight those concerns. At the same time, we acknowledge that mines other than anti-personnel mines are legitimate weapons, which serve important military purposes with regard to self-defence and other military operations. It is important to strike a balance between humanitarian concerns and military considerations. We very much welcome and support the efforts undertaken by the coordinator, and fully support his efforts to work out a substantive protocol on mines other than anti-personnel mines, which, together with Amended Protocol II, will be an effective instrument in preventing the irresponsible use of such weapons.

We firmly expect to reach a substantive agreement on this issue at the meeting of States parties in November, and we call upon all States parties to spare no effort to achieve that objective. The European Union will continue to work with the objective of agreeing upon a legally binding instrument on mines other than anti-personnel mines as soon as possible.

We also hope that we will be able to make progress on the other issues currently being discussed, such as compliance and the implementation of existing principles of international humanitarian law and on possible preventive technical measures to minimize the risk of munitions becoming explosive remnants of war.

Mr. Koné (Mali) (spoke in French): As this is the first occasion on which I have taken the floor in the First Committee this session, my delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to guide the proceedings of this important Committee. Our congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau. We have seen your experience and your pragmatism since the beginning of our work, and we

believe that they augur well for the success of our deliberations. I can assure you that my delegation stands ready to cooperate with you as you discharge your lofty mission.

I would like to pay a well-deserved tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Alfonso de Alba, who conducted the proceedings of the First Committee during the previous session in such an outstanding manner.

I would like to congratulate Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for the very enlightening statement that he made on 3 October. I would also like to associate myself with the statements made by the representatives of Nigeria and of Indonesia on behalf of, respectively, the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement.

I share the legitimate concerns that have been expressed throughout the general debate about the current crisis in the field of disarmament, which is the result of a lack of political will on the part of States because of their differing interests. It has created a deadlock in international arms control and disarmament forums.

The problem of small arms and light weapons continues to be a focus of attention for my country and for all of Africa, since it is a challenge to the peace, security and socio-economic development of our States. Dealing with that scourge will require a collective effort on the part of the international community. In this connection, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa fully reflects the commitment of our subregion.

My delegation also welcomes the international community's recent adoption of a draft political instrument on the marking and tracing of light weapons, as proposed by the Open-ended Working Group set up for that purpose by the Secretary-General. Although we had hoped that it would be legally binding, the draft international instrument further increases the awareness of States of the gravity of the situation. We hope that it will prove to be just the first phase of a process leading to the desired outcome.

There is a clear connection between disarmament and development: disarmament is an essential requirement for achieving development. In this

connection, we call for the effective implementation of resolution 59/78 on that issue. In this connection, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the detailed information he has provided in his report (document A/60/161) on assistance to States for curbing illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them.

Mali, for its part, has taken important steps since 1993 to combat the proliferation of light weapons, and its civil society has been very much involved in this effort. One can see this from the 12 November 2004 adoption of law 04-050, which thoroughly regulates the trade, manufacture and possession of weapons and ammunition. This law institutes strict controls and establishes penalties that are a sufficiently strong deterrent, ranging from fines to imprisonment.

In conclusion, I would like to inform delegations that my country has submitted a draft resolution for adoption by our Committee on assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them (A.C.1/60/L.37). I invite other Member States to join in sponsoring the text, so that the Committee can adopt the draft resolution by a broad consensus, as it has with similar texts in the past.

Mr. Loedel (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the States members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and its associated States — Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela — to address the subject of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which the Committee is discussing under the "conventional weapons" cluster.

MERCOSUR and its associated States wish to underscore the international community's huge responsibility to make more meaningful progress in combating the scourge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. This sub-category of conventional weapons continues to breed domestic conflict in many countries, thus jeopardizing peace negotiations and post-conflict stages and further exacerbating situations of violence. A persistent problem in this connection is the easy access by civilians to weapons and ammunition. The number of ways and means of acquiring these weapons, whether through legal or illegal channels, is great. Therefore, MERCOSUR and its associated States deem it necessary for there to be stronger State control and regulation of such weapons in the possession of civilians, to avoid not only the

proliferation of violence, but also the human, social and economic costs that the use of these weapons entails.

Our subregion wishes to reaffirm that it is necessary to reduce the causes of demand so as to develop a culture of peace, in which disputes can be settled without violence, thus reducing the power of weapons in society.

Our group views with concern the fact that multilateral efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons have not attained the proposed objectives. The draft international instrument on marking and tracing that was agreed on by the Open-ended Working Group established to deal with that subject is far from what reflect the needs of the countries most affected by this scourge. It was to be the first international agreement emanating from the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and it was meant to be the acid test of its credibility.

MERCOSUR and its associated States have continuously sought negotiations towards a legally binding document, which would include the topic of ammunition. Such a treaty should include: high-level common standards for proper marking of all arms and light weapons; detailed international standards for establishing a register of arms transfers; provisions for the marking and tracing of ammunition; strategies to strengthen the operative capabilities of Governments when enforcing the agreed measures; provisions making it possible to bring the instrument into accord with the responsibilities that States already possess under international law; and mechanisms for the future review and improvement of the treaty.

Unfortunately, little of this was achieved in the agreed draft instrument. For our countries, and for the cause of combating the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, the result involves a very delicate precedent for possible future negotiations on a regulatory instrument on the actions of illicit brokers and on a future international treaty on the arms trade — which, in the view of our subregion, are two key elements of the comprehensive approach that these problems require.

MERCOSUR and its associated States attach paramount importance to considering where we are and where we are headed in this struggle vis-à-vis our

expectations in the lead-up to the Review Conference on the Programme of Action expected to be held in mid-2006. In this connection, MERCOSUR and its associated States deem it important to supplement the 2001 Programme of Action with additional decisive agreements in areas such as civilian possession of weapons and arms transfers to illicit armed groups. It is essential to determine the sources, resources and technical assistance necessary to guarantee the sustainability of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, as well as to strengthen the draft instrument on marking and tracing in order to address in greater depth key areas that were not dealt with appropriately.

In conclusion, we wish to recall that one of MERCOSUR's associated States, Colombia, will introduce, along with South Africa and Japan, a draft resolution entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", to be issued as document A/C.1/60/L.57. MERCOSUR and its associated States acknowledge the importance of that draft resolution, which is similar to others adopted in past years.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): Let me preface my statement in this thematic debate on conventional weapons by reiterating the commitment of Sierra Leone to the principles of multilateralism and universality in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Sierra Leone does not reject any multilateral instrument that is designed to enhance international peace and security. Any delays in the ratification of existing instruments are attributable to the sheer volume of legislation that our Parliament has had to address, especially since the end of the rebel war.

This Committee will recall that last year Sierra Leone ratified the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its first three Protocols and accepted the amendment to Protocol II pertaining to mines, booby traps and other devices, Protocol IV and the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War. The measures we have taken on the implementation of the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines, including the destruction of our entire stockpile, are well known. Our commitment to the implementation of the Nairobi Action Plan on landmines is also well known.

Let me turn now to the subject of the illicit trade, circulation and use of small arms and light weapons. Instead of the usual statement, I thought it appropriate at this time to take a slightly different approach by posing some questions. In doing so, I will to some extent be echoing or re-emphasizing some of the issues and concerns that have been expressed by other delegations.

First, why are States being urged to take strong and effective action, including through legally binding instruments, to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons, which is a threat to international peace and security? Why are States being urged to come up with enabling national legislation in compliance with multilateral instruments on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction? Why is such a high level of determination being demonstrated — including through strong legal measures — to prevent terrorists from making or acquiring what are euphemistically called dirty bombs, as if there were clean bombs?

And why has there been such reluctance on our part to come up with a legally binding international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely manner, illicit small arms and light weapons? How do we reconcile that reluctance with the preamble of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects? For instance, in the preamble, did we not express several concerns, including grave concern about the devastating consequences of this phenomenon on children, its wide range of humanitarian and socio-economic consequences and the serious threats it poses to peace, safety, stability and sustainable development at the individual, local, national, regional and international levels? In the preamble, did we not also express recognition that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons undermines respect for international humanitarian law? And did we not recognize that it fuels crime and terrorism? Those points were articulated a few minutes ago by Ambassador Freeman of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union.

Granted, the Programme of Action is not an international convention, but a political declaration. The question is, how can we translate those expressions of serious concern into something more concrete — something that is backed by the rule of law?

If something is illicit, it cannot be treated with political declarations alone. If it undermines international humanitarian law, the prescription should not be limited to political declarations or declarations of intent; it must be counteracted by tough laws. The illicit trade in and circulation of small arms and light weapons must be treated accordingly. And because the illicit trade is international in nature, we need legally binding international instruments to address it. Declarations are good, because they constitute programmes of action detailing what States could do to help eradicate and combat the scourge. But we must ask ourselves whether declarations are enough for the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In the same breath, we must ask ourselves whether political declarations are enough to combat terrorism, which is becoming another scourge in the world today.

In the view of my delegation, considering its magnitude and its wide-ranging consequences for millions of people worldwide, we need to take a comprehensive approach to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, including illegal brokering and ammunition, which is what my delegation understands the phrase "in all its aspects" to mean. We must see the problem not merely from a disarmament perspective but also, and more important, from the perspective of its humanitarian and development implications.

My delegation notes with interest the number of draft resolutions related to the illicit trade in and circulation of small arms and light weapons that the Committee is being asked to consider at the sixtieth session. It is unprecedented; we are impressed. While we share the concern expressed by other delegations that the 2005 summit outcome document (resolution 60/1) was silent on the vital issue of disarmament and non-proliferation, Sierra Leone welcomes the possibility that the First Committee, as the draft resolutions indicate, will articulate, more than it ever has before, the urgency and indeed the moral imperative of dealing more effectively with the scourge of the illicit trade in and use of small arms and light weapons.

The questions I have posed are not rhetorical. They are, in the view of the Sierra Leone delegation, pertinent and implicitly replete with food for thought. They are relevant in the context of our forthcoming review — which for us will also be an opportunity for

a thorough assessment — of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action.

In closing, I would like to join others in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and to assure you of the cooperation and support of the Sierra Leone delegation.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China is committed to appropriately addressing humanitarian issues in the field of arms control. We maintain that in addressing humanitarian concerns, due consideration should be given to the legitimate military and security needs of sovereign States and to the economic and technological capacities of all countries.

China earnestly fulfils its obligations under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and is committed to enhancing its effectiveness and universality. China has always been deeply concerned about civilian casualties caused by the inappropriate use of landmines, in particular anti-personnel landmines. China supports appropriate and reasonable restrictions on the use of landmines and has strictly implemented the provisions of the amended Protocol to the CCW, on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices.

China has taken an active part in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts of the States Parties to the CCW. We fully understand the humanitarian concerns caused by anti-vehicle landmines. We have consistently adopted a practical approach in exploring appropriate solutions to the issue with other parties and, to that end, have put forward many constructive proposals. At the most recent meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts, held in August this year, we proposed a package solution to the issue of anti-vehicle landmines. We hope that other parties will consider the Chinese package of proposals in a serious and pragmatic manner and that they will take the opportunity to make progress in the relevant discussions.

China fully understands and sympathizes with the problems that landmines have caused for other countries. We have been actively engaged in various forms of international demining assistance and cooperation in recent years. In September, China began a demining assistance programme in Thailand. We sent a group of experts to provide technical training to Thai demining engineers. We also donated demining

equipment and materials to Thailand for the programme.

Vigorously combating illegal activities related to small arms and light weapons is of great importance in maintaining regional peace, stability and development and in fighting terrorism and activities related to transnational organized crime such as drug trafficking and smuggling. The agreement on a draft international instrument on identifying and tracing illicit small arms and light weapons represents important progress in the multilateral process of combating such weapons.

China consistently supports and actively participates in international efforts to solve the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In April this year, China hosted in Beijing an international workshop on small arms and light weapons, which was co-sponsored by the United Nations, Japan and Switzerland. I am pleased to inform the Committee that the workshop was a great success.

The Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action will be convened in 2006. We hope that all countries will make their best efforts to ensure a positive Conference outcome, which will provide a new direction for future multilateral efforts in the field of small arms and light weapons. We take note of the fact that a number of parties have already set out many ideas and initiatives for the 2006 review process. During the preparatory process, which will begin early next year, as well as at the Review Conference itself, all countries can engage in an in-depth study of and debate on those ideas and initiatives. To ensure the authority and universality of the possible outcome of the 2006 Review Conference, consensus must continue to be regarded as an important rule.

Since many countries have yet to make serious study of certain new ideas and suggestions proposed by other countries or groups of countries, the First Committee's meetings this year need not draw any conclusion on those proposals or in any way prejudice the outcome of the 2006 Review Conference, let alone put those immature ideas to the vote. Otherwise, the result of the voting would be highly likely to have a negative impact on the review process next year.

Information security has a bearing on international peace and security, as well as on national economies and people's livelihoods. It is in the interests of all countries, and the common

responsibility of the international community, properly to address the issue of information security for the benefit of maintaining international security and stability. The fact that no substantial results were achieved this year by the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts demonstrates the complexity of the issue and the need for further efforts to find an appropriate solution. China supports comprehensive and in-depth examination by the United Nations of the threats and challenges in the field of information security with a view to formulating reasonable and feasible proposals to address the issue.

Mr. Walsh (Canada): The proliferation and misuse of conventional weapons exact a terrible human toll each year. Lives are lost, communities are traumatized, and societies live in fear. Economic development is stifled, stabilization and peacebuilding efforts are hampered, and human security in all of its aspects is compromised.

Canada remains fully committed to collaborative international action to address the negative effects of conventional weapons on the lives and livelihoods of people throughout the world. There have been significant developments on several conventional arms issues during the past year, and 2006 will present opportunities to build upon our collective achievements to date.

In 2001, United Nations Member States gathered to develop and strengthen international efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. That resulted in a strong United Nations Programme of Action that has provided guidance and impetus for action by the international community for the past few years. Within the framework of the Programme of Action, consensus was achieved in June 2005 on an instrument to mark and trace small arms and light weapons. Although Canada and many others would have preferred a legally binding instrument, the agreement will improve the tracing of small arms and light weapons throughout the world and reduce the incidence of illicit use.

Canada congratulates Switzerland on its deft chairmanship of the Open-ended Working Group on marking and tracing and fully supports the Chair's recommendation that the applicability of provisions of the instrument to United Nations peacekeeping operations be considered further within the framework of the United Nations.

The forthcoming Review Conference in July 2006 will be a seminal opportunity to review our work since 2001, to further elaborate the United Nations Programme of Action, and to develop communications and resource mobilization strategies to generate the political will and resources needed to fulfil our objectives in the years ahead.

Among the specific areas that Canada would like to see discussed and addressed more comprehensively are transfer controls, including export criteria and illicit brokering; national regulation; appropriate use of small arms and light weapons by State security officials and agents; measures to reduce demand for such weapons; and ensuring that the issue be fully integrated into the national and sectoral development plans of affected developing countries.

Turning to the world of mine action, progress has been remarkable. In just over five years, 147 nations have ratified or acceded to the Ottawa Convention, which bans the production, stockpiling, use and transfer of anti-personnel mines and makes provision for the rehabilitation and reintegration of survivors into their communities. More than 37 million stockpiled mines have been destroyed. Vast tracts of land have been cleared and the global trade in such mines has virtually ended. Most important, the number of direct casualties has been cut from approximately 25,000 to be between 15,000 and 20,000 victims per year.

The First Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention — the Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World — in November 2004 charted a clear course for the future in a visionary high-level Declaration and an ambitious 70-point Action Plan that will govern the work of States parties for the next five-year period. Canada urges the 50 States not yet party to ratify or to accede to the Ottawa Convention as soon as possible and to become part of the global effort to rid the world of the scourge of anti-personnel landmines for all time.

Canada is also pleased to be party to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) and its Protocols, which address non-detectable fragments, mines, booby traps and other devices, incendiary weapons and blinding laser weapons. We have ratified Protocols I through IV and are currently preparing our instrument of ratification of Protocol V, which seeks to ameliorate

the humanitarian and development impact of explosive remnants of war.

Canada, like many others, is deeply concerned about all weapons that, by design or by the manner in which they are used, are prone to indiscriminate effect. We strongly encourage States signatories of the CCW to continue work aimed at improving the reliability of specific munitions, including submunitions, and to ensure that they are used only in a manner that complies fully with international humanitarian law.

Canada also supports the prohibition of the use of undetectable anti-vehicle mines and will continue to promote the development of a legally binding instrument governing mines other than anti-personnel mines at the next CCW annual meeting in November.

We know all too well that the cumulative effect of the illicit use of conventional weapons has been nothing less than horrific. I close by reiterating Canada's commitment to working cooperatively with other United Nations Member States to check their deadly legacy and, in so doing, to contribute to the creation of a more secure world for all.

Mr. Kahiluoto (Finland): Speaking for Finland for the first time at this session of the First Committee, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, and offer you and your Bureau our full support as you guide the Committee to a successful outcome.

In addition to the statement made by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union, which we fully support, allow me briefly to highlight Finnish national views on four issues relevant to this thematic discussion.

First, on the issue of the brokering of small arms and light weapons, my delegation would have wished to see a more robust outcome than presently foreseen in the omnibus draft resolution on small arms and light weapons. We share the opinion advocated by several humanitarian actors that the illegal brokering of small arms and light weapons is a well-known and well-defined phenomenon. National and regional legislative and regulatory measures have already been taken to address the issue and, in our opinion, the international community should have in its hands the conceptual tools needed to act more resolutely in tackling that problem as a priority issue. We expect and hope that the group of governmental experts on brokering, to be established in 2006, will begin its work immediately

after the Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, with a mandate that includes at least preliminary elaboration of a draft legal instrument on brokering.

Secondly, I turn to the issue of assistance in capacity-building and implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons. We took note of the discussions on that item in the Second Biennial Meeting of States, held in July. On that basis, Finland believes that a more focused debate on the issue of assistance and capacity-building — taking into account both supply and demand perspectives — would be fostered by an independent study on needs and available resources. Ideally, such a study should be made available as part of the preparations for the 2006 review conference.

Thirdly, as we embark on the review of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms, we should actively seek the maximum involvement of civil society in the process. Our review stands to benefit significantly from the commitment and experience of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), many of which have direct and relevant experience with the issue in the field. The Programme of Action clearly recognizes that partnership, and we should strengthen it. We think it would be highly beneficial if we could endorse the broadest possible participation of NGOs in the review process, including the thematic debates and the Preparatory Committee meetings.

Finally, as a fourth issue, allow me to put on record the December 2004 decision of the Finnish Parliament to approve a Governmental white paper on defence and security policy, and to set a definite timetable for Finland to accede in 2012 to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction — the Ottawa Convention. To that end, we have also decided to join in sponsoring the draft resolution on the Ottawa Convention (A/C.1/60/L.56).

Ms. Auer (Austria): As Austria takes the floor for the first time, my delegation congratulates you, Mr. Chairman, and your Bureau upon your election, and assures you of our full support.

My delegation fully supports the statement made by the representative of the United Kingdom, on behalf of the European Union, in this cluster debate. In November 2004, the States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction met in Nairobi for the Convention's First Review Conference: the Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World. The Nairobi Summit accomplished two objectives. First, it took account of what had been achieved so far, and secondly, it defined a forward-looking Action Plan. Indeed, we can celebrate considerable progress. The use of anti-personnel mines has been markedly reduced in recent years. Fewer anti-personnel mines are being produced, and the trade in this perilous weapon has almost completely ceased.

Moreover, the number of States parties to the Convention is approaching 150, including the majority of those States that are most heavily affected by landmines, such as Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Mozambique. The Convention has established an international standard that is also respected by the majority of those States that have not yet joined this important humanitarian instrument. In addition, the States parties to the Convention have destroyed more than 37 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines and have cleared vast tracts of mined lands. The annual number of new mine victims is now significantly lower than it used to be, and many landmine survivors are now receiving better care and assistance.

In order to overcome the remaining challenges, the States parties to the Convention adopted the Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009, which sets out a comprehensive set of 70 concrete actions, including on the further pursuit of universalization, mine clearance, victim assistance, stockpile destruction and resource mobilization. The most significant challenge for the next five years clearly will be to make sure that States parties meet the 10-year mine clearance deadline for clearing mined areas.

Article V of the Convention requires States parties to make every effort to identify all areas under their jurisdiction or control in which anti-personnel mines are known or suspected to be in place. The Convention does not contain language that would require each State party to search every square metre of its territory to find mines. The Convention requires, however, the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in

mined areas which a State Party has made reasonable efforts to identify. While terms such as "mine-free", "impact-free" and "mine-safe" are sometimes used, such terms do not exist in the text of the Convention and are not synonymous with Convention obligations.

In November this year, the States parties to the Convention will gather in Zagreb for the Convention's Sixth Meeting of States Parties. It is reassuring that the States parties were not affected by post-summit fatigue. To the contrary, States parties are proceeding with an innovative process making it possible to measure the progress achieved in the implementation of the Nairobi Action Plan and to identify priority areas for the following year. The so-called Zagreb progress report is now being prepared in a cooperative effort involving all interested States parties to the Convention, as well as relevant organizations. It is supposed to be the first in a series of annual reports on progress made in pursuing the aims of the Nairobi Action Plan. We are convinced that this method will contribute significantly to the implementation of commitments undertaken in the Convention and the Nairobi Action Plan.

Austria welcomes the appeal of the 2005 world summit to the parties to the Mine Ban Treaty to fully implement their commitments, as well as to all States in a position to do so to provide greater assistance to mine-affected States. In addition, Austria wishes to call upon all States that have not yet done so, to ratify or accede to the Mine Ban Treaty as soon as possible, in order to achieve our goal of conclusively ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines, for all people, for all time.

Mr. Mine (Japan): With the permission of the Chair, I shall make a statement combining the introduction of a draft resolution and remarks of a general nature.

The United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms, adopted by consensus in 2001, provides an essential guide for comprehensive efforts to address the multifaceted issue of small arms and light weapons. It is essential for the international community to actively and steadfastly implement the Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels.

Recognizing that, Japan, together with Colombia and South Africa, is again submitting a draft resolution entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", to be issued as document

A/C.1/60/L.57, the content of which, as with similar texts in previous years, provides concrete steps for the near future based on the progress achieved in the course of the past year in this field. We sincerely hope we will receive the support and cooperation of all Member States in the draft resolution's consensus adoption, as we believe that it offers a reliable approach to resolving the problem.

The year 2006, when the Review Conference takes place, will mark a significant turning point for the international community in tackling problems related to small arms and light weapons. As mentioned in this year's draft resolution, the Review Conference is extremely important for setting the agenda in this field beyond 2006, and Japan therefore wishes to encourage all States parties to make every effort to ensure a successful outcome by involving participants from civil society offering useful knowledge and experience.

At the Review Conference, it is essential for us to examine all aspects of the small arms and light weapons problem, which are multifaceted and complicated and are inter-linked in a complex manner. Each country or region has different problems, depending on its own specific circumstances. Bearing this point in mind during the Review Conference, we must seek to identify the problems that the international community should address jointly in the future, and set the agenda accordingly.

The problems that the international community must take steps to address are gradually becoming apparent. In this connection, Japan believes that we had good discussions at the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July. Without mentioning each individual element, let me say that the challenges illuminated by the Biennial Meeting provided very useful indications about the appropriate topics for discussion at the Review Conference. I would just like to touch upon the request from certain countries to insert in the draft resolution a paragraph concerning the inclusion of the concept of small arms and light weapons transfer controls in future programmes of action. I actively participated in discussions at the Biennial Meeting, and I am aware that transfer controls was one of the important issues very widely discussed on that occasion. But, during the

discussions, there were also other issues deemed to be important. I believe it is premature to say something that might prejudice the result of the Review Conference.

In any case, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation of the efforts the Chairman, Ambassador Pasi Patokallio, whose dedicated efforts ensured the success of the Meeting.

On the subject of the Preparatory Committee for the 2006 Review Conference, we have the first set of talks scheduled for two weeks next January and, if necessary, we will have another round of Preparatory Committee talks for two weeks at a later date, leading to the Review Conference. The most important task for the Preparatory Committee will be setting the agenda for the Review Conference. What to include as topics for discussion and consideration at the Review Conference should be discussed in that forum. In the meantime, paragraph 1 of our draft resolution encourages all initiatives for the successful conclusion of the Review Conference. We look forward to the early designation of a Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee, and I would like to invite all delegations to provide him or her with the necessary input.

Some ideas about the eventual topics to be discussed on this occasion, such as ammunition, end user certificates, regulation of civilian possession and so forth, are presented for inclusion in the draft resolution. However, it is quite difficult to determine at this point whether or not these items enjoy consensus as topics. Nor do we have sufficient time to discuss these somewhat controversial matters.

In addition, Japan believes that the Review Conference will be a good opportunity for each country to share its experiences with respect to implementation of the draft international instrument on marking and tracing, the negotiations on which we concluded in June this year. I would like to reiterate here the great significance of its implementation and to call upon all States to continue their steady efforts in that regard.

Concerning the group of governmental experts on brokering, by paragraph 3 the Assembly would decide to establish such a group to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation on brokering. The mandate is based on the language of the Programme of Action. Some Member States have requested us to define the group's mandate more precisely, proposing to allow for consideration of the feasibility of

developing an international instrument. However, "further steps to enhance international cooperation", to use the words of the ninth preambular paragraph, are not necessarily limited to the question of international instruments. The summary of the discussion of the broad-based consultations held in 2005 also indicates that the feasibility of the instrument is not the only question to be addressed on the brokering issue. Other issues would include specific data on the magnitude of the illicit brokering, existing national legislation and regional or international agreements and forms of international cooperation needed — quite apart from an international instrument, if I may add. The group of governmental experts itself should determine the agenda to be addressed and the direction to be followed in its deliberations.

I also would like to emphasize the importance of promoting projects on the ground. Japan is actively applying its two-pillar approach by promoting, in parallel, projects on the ground and the international rule-making efforts that I mentioned earlier. With regard to the former pillar, we will continue to provide assistance to projects for collecting and destroying surplus small arms and light weapons in affected countries and for capacity-building in the areas of law enforcement and export-import controls. We will also strengthen our efforts to provide aid in the field of conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery processes, which constitute important elements of peacebuilding, a major focus of Japan's medium-term official development assistance policy.

I would now like to make some remarks on the overall situation related to small arms and light weapons, on which I understand that there are several draft resolutions this year. Generally speaking, now that we are making vigorous efforts to reform the First Committee and to improve its effectiveness, it is appropriate that draft resolutions that are similar in nature be merged to the maximum extent feasible. Japan believes that efforts in that direction are important and requests the continued cooperation of the countries concerned in this regard.

Since the adoption of the Programme of Action, each country has been actively tackling small arms and light weapons problems, and we have seen significant progress in this field. However, much remains to be done. Each country concerned has its own ideas on how to adequately address these problems. Japan believes this thematic debate provides us with an

important opportunity for a frank exchange of views among countries. I sincerely hope we will engage in active and profound discussions on this issue.

I now have a few words in respect to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. I strongly hope that the States parties meeting in November will succeed in adopting a draft protocol on mines other than anti-personnel mines, something which has been under discussion for over four years. There remain only a few outstanding issues, and the goal is almost within reach. I urge all the States parties to exercise flexibility so that we may create an instrument that will minimize the humanitarian problem caused by such mines while maintaining the option of their use in cases of military necessity.

Finally, as regards the Ottawa Treaty on Anti-personnel Mines, the coming States parties meeting, to be held in Croatia in November and December, is the first States parties meeting since the Nairobi Summit, held last year. I strongly hope that the meeting will ensure and promote progress in implementing the Nairobi Action Plan, as well as offering further direction towards its full implementation. Among the Action Plan items, Japan would like to emphasize the importance of the universalization of the Convention and the effective implementation of projects relating to anti-personnel mines.

Mr. Streuli (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I shall limit my remarks to the subject of conventional weapons. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the importance that Switzerland attaches to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) and its Protocols.

In the nearly 10 years since the First Review Conference took place, the States parties have succeeded in making the CCW a dynamic instrument, capable of continual adaptation to the development of conventional weapons of modern warfare. They have boldly addressed questions central to improving humanitarian protection of civilian populations, banning, *inter alia*, blinding laser weapons and incendiary weapons in certain circumstances, and recently adopting, in the form of Protocol V, measures

to reduce the harmful effects of the explosive remnants of war. The process of ratifying Protocol V in Switzerland has now entered its final phase. My country invites all States that have not yet done so to ratify the Protocol with a view to attaining its universality.

Although the discussion on mines other than anti-personnel mines was launched following the Second Review Conference, in 2001, it is only recently that the positions of States parties have converged sufficiently for there to be efforts to search for a comprehensive solution to the humanitarian problems these weapons cause. Switzerland holds the view that civilian populations need to be better protected against the indiscriminate effects of these mines, while remaining fully aware that, in addition to humanitarian needs, military considerations must be taken into account. My country believes that any new instrument must enhance the protection of civilian populations. The new rules concerning mines other than anti-personnel mines must clearly strengthen rather than weaken current international humanitarian law, in particular amended Protocol II to the CCW. This is why Switzerland is in the process of reviewing the working documents submitted by the coordinator of the Working Group on Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines, with regard both to their compatibility with current international humanitarian law and to their potential to strengthen it.

Some aspects of the problem posed by explosive remnants of war, in particular in post-conflict phases, have been regulated through legally binding provisions linked to the adoption of Protocol V. Switzerland is encouraged by the adoption of the Protocol and by the continuation of the discussions, within the framework of the CCW, on explosive remnants of war. My country considers that broader measures are essential to prevent the devastating effects of certain types of munitions, including submunitions, on civilian populations and national development. In particular, my country wishes to underline the need for a set of international regulations on preventive technical measures that can, *inter alia*, improve the reliability of certain types of munitions, including submunitions. Switzerland will therefore continue its efforts towards that end, as it has been doing for the more than five years since it submitted to the States parties an initial proposal for international regulations on this issue. We actively support the efforts to develop common standards for technical requirements applicable to submunitions.

Switzerland considers it essential to continue the discussions on the explosive remnants of war beyond the next Meeting of States Parties.

Switzerland is also encouraged that the efforts of the States parties to create a compliance mechanism for the CCW and its Protocols are progressing, and hopes that an effective and credible solution can be found very soon.

My country also attaches great importance to the universalization and implementation of Protocol II on the Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices, as amended in 1996. It considers Protocol II to be an indispensable complement to the other instruments of international humanitarian law on mines and other devices, as a means to reduce the suffering of civilian populations during and after conflict. In my capacity as President-designate of the Seventh Annual Conference of the States Parties to the Protocol, which will take place in just over a month's time, I am committed to encouraging those States which have not already done so to become parties to the Protocol, and to assisting States parties to ensure the best possible implementation of the Protocol in their countries.

Mr. Kurup (India): While nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as weapons of mass destruction, are rightly accorded priority in the area of disarmament and arms control, conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, constitute an important — and arguably a more immediate — concern for humanity. This is because of continuing armed conflicts between States where conventional weapons are used, and also because of the prevalence of intra-State conflicts and terrorism in various parts of the world.

India therefore remains deeply concerned that conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, continue to pose a grave danger to the security of States. Their indiscriminate and irresponsible use, including by non-State actors, has caused enormous humanitarian concern. Such weapons disrupt political stability and social harmony, derail pluralism and democracy and hamper growth and development. They also fuel international terrorism and internal conflicts.

The United Nations has had a measure of success in dealing with the threat posed by illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The adoption by consensus of

the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July 2001 reflected the common commitment of Member States to address this issue. The Programme of Action outlines a realistic, achievable and comprehensive approach to addressing the problem at the national, regional and global levels. India believes that efforts to combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons will contribute to global efforts to combat terrorism and other organized crime. We believe that State responsibility is critical in ensuring this, primarily through efforts made by individual States themselves, and also through cooperation with other States at the regional and global levels.

The Biennial Meeting of States, in July 2005, provided a welcome opportunity to take stock of national implementation of the Programme of Action. We now look forward to the 2006 Review Conference, which will provide an opportunity to review the effectiveness of the Programme of Action in achieving its objectives and to consider further measures to strengthen and promote its implementation. We would like the Review Conference to consider additional measures to increase the efficacy of the Programme of Action, including the prohibition of transfers of weapons to non-State actors.

It is a positive development that we succeeded in reaching consensus on a draft international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. Even though it will not be a legally binding instrument, which India would have preferred, we joined the consensus, since the draft instrument contains vital commitments by States to mark all small arms and light weapons according to universal standards and to cooperate with other States in tracing illicit ones. This significant achievement reflects our common commitment to achieving the objectives enshrined in the Programme of Action. Indeed, agreement on the draft instrument reinforces the multilateral ethic that is so frequently absent in today's discourse on disarmament and arms control.

India will also continue to pursue the objective of a non-discriminatory, universal and global ban on anti-personnel mines in a manner that addresses the legitimate defence requirements of States. Landmines continue to play an important role in the defence of States that have long land borders with difficult and

inhospitable terrains. The process of completely eliminating anti-personnel mines will be facilitated by the availability of militarily effective, non-lethal and cost-effective alternative technologies.

Under the umbrella of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), States parties to the Convention have achieved considerable success in dealing with the humanitarian concerns posed by indiscriminate use of landmines. Its Protocol II, dealing with landmines and booby-traps, was amended in 1996 to make it more effective in minimizing the danger posed by landmines. The scope of the Convention was extended in 2001 to cover internal conflicts. In 2003, another Protocol was added to the CCW to deal with the dangers to civilians posed by explosive remnants of war. That was a signal achievement upon which we can build further in the CCW process. India is strongly committed to the CCW and has ratified its five Protocols, including Amended Protocol II and Protocol V, on explosive remnants of war.

India had the privilege to chair the CCW process during 2002 and 2003, when the Working Group on Explosive Remnants of War engaged in negotiations to conclude Protocol V. A working group within the Group of Governmental Experts to Prepare the Review Conference for the CCW continues to consider the implementation of existing principles of international humanitarian law in the context of explosive remnants of war. It is also studying possible preventive measures aimed at improving the design of certain specific types of munitions, including submunitions, in order to minimize the humanitarian risks of such munitions becoming explosive remnants of war. Another working group - the Working Group on Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines - has the responsibility to consider proposals with the aim of elaborating appropriate recommendations. The Indian delegation is continuing its constructive contributions to the deliberations of both those bodies.

We shall work for steady progress in the areas of small arms and light weapons and the CCW process. We hope that the process will be extended to other areas of conventional disarmament, leading to the goal of general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Limon (Suriname): On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Suriname, I am

honoured to address the Committee in its thematic debate on conventional weapons.

The proliferation of conventional weapons in many regions of the world continues to pose an enormous threat to international peace and security. The possibility that such weapons will end up in the hands of those who engage in organized crime cannot be denied. The responsibility for preventing such transfers from licit to illicit hands lies not only at the national level, but also among States, at the international level. States must take urgent action to stop the illicit flow of these weapons to various regions, and we welcome the already established bilateral subregional cooperation initiatives.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a difficult problem that requires a comprehensive response. States must demonstrate the necessary political will to effectively address the issue of identifying and tracing these weapons and to combat the complex problems related to the illicit trade in them.

In Suriname, as in the rest of the Caribbean region, the illicit trade in these weapons is linked to drug trafficking and other cross-border criminal activities, and it threatens our social and economic fabric. Suriname thus acknowledges the threat posed by the illegal trafficking in arms. We are convinced that the illicit proliferation and circulation of and traffic in small arms impede development.

My country remains committed to the implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action on Small Arms and has submitted its reports in that regard. However, like many other developing countries, we face tremendous difficulties in implementing such multilaterally agreed instruments. We therefore continue to support the call for increased cooperation at the national, regional and international levels.

Landmines constitute one of the major issues on the agenda of the First Committee. Because of the suffering of thousands of innocent people every year, it is necessary that States take strong measures to combat this phenomenon by acceding to and implementing the Ottawa Convention. With the adoption of the 2004 Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009, States renewed their commitment to achieving the goal of the Ottawa Convention, namely, a world free of anti-personnel mines.

Suriname ratified the Ottawa Convention on landmines on 23 May 2002 and recently completed its demining project. Suriname was declared mine-free as of April 2005. However, we are still engaged in adjusting the legislation on landmines as a continued effort to implement the provisions of the Ottawa Convention and of its Protocols.

Suriname continues to support the idea of an effective and legally binding multilateral instrument on small arms and light weapons within the framework of the United Nations. Despite the fact that we could reach agreement only on a draft political document during the work of the Open-ended Working Group on marking and tracing, Suriname would like to stress the importance of cooperation among all States in addressing the illicit trade in and illicit proliferation of these relatively small but dangerous weapons.

Ms. Vikoy (Norway): The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons remains a major challenge to security and development in many regions of the world. Easy access to small arms makes violence more lethal and conflict more protracted. The Millennium Development Goals are unattainable in such an environment. We are pleased that the summit outcome document (resolution 60/1) reflects that understanding.

The United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms remains the main international framework for dealing with the challenge of small arms and light weapons. The recent Biennial Meeting of States reflected slow but steady progress in its implementation. We welcome the agreement on a politically binding draft instrument on marking and tracing, reached in June this year. Norway would, however, have preferred a legally binding instrument. The General Assembly must now adopt the proposed instrument and should also provide direction concerning how to deal with the question of ammunition.

The next step in implementing the Programme of Action is to enhance international cooperation on brokering. Norway has, together with the Netherlands, supported a number of regional and international activities to promote better understanding of the brokering issue. Norway believes there is already a significant degree of international consensus on the need for brokering controls and on the means to be employed. Since 2001, six regional and multilateral

agreements concerning arms brokering, covering some 120 States, have been developed.

The time is ripe to build on that consensus. We urge all Member States to agree at the present session of the General Assembly on a mandate for a group of governmental experts to look into ways of enhancing international cooperation on combating the illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons. The mandate should state that the group of experts should look into the feasibility of a legally binding instrument on brokering. We believe that the group of experts should start its work as early as possible in 2006.

The next milestone will be the 2006 conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action. It would be appropriate if at the present session the General Assembly provided some direction regarding the preparations for the Review Conference by agreeing on some priorities for the next five-year phase.

We should look for ways in which to improve the security environment for the individual. A key motivation for acquiring small arms and light weapons is a sense of insecurity. Governments, law enforcement agencies and civil society all have crucial roles to play in enhancing security at the individual level.

We must address problems related to the misuse of small arms and light weapons by State agencies and non-State actors alike. Civilian ownership remains a vital issue. Most illegal weapons are originally legally acquired and later diverted. The issue of brokering — already on the table — is central. It needs to be accompanied by progress in developing end-user certificates for the trade in small arms and light weapons.

Another relevant issue is the gender dimension and, in particular, the way women are affected by the misuse of small arms. Assistance to victims and their families is also important in this regard. At the same time, we must avoid overloading the agenda of the Review Conference and must focus on those issues we consider the most important and on which we believe real progress can be made.

We support efforts to secure agreement on a legally binding arms trade treaty covering all trade in conventional weapons. This effort should be seen as complementary to, not an alternative to, the efforts to

agree on a legally binding instrument on illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons.

Norway welcomes all ongoing efforts to prevent the illicit production, transfer and unauthorized access to man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS), their components and related use instructions materials. We recognize that MANPADS pose a threat to civil aviation, peacekeeping, crisis management and global security, and we encourage the development of effective controls in that area, including the safe and effective management of stockpiles of such weapons. We fully support the Australian draft resolution on this subject (A/C.1/60/L.49).

Norway welcomes the efforts by Sweden to obtain General Assembly support for the work done in the context of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The Convention is a crucial instrument in mitigating the humanitarian impact of certain weapons. Over the past years there has indeed been progress within the CCW. We have agreed on a legally binding Protocol on the explosive remnants of war, and we hope that the Protocol will enter into force as soon as possible. Our next task is to agree on preventive measures in order to mitigate human suffering caused by the use of submunitions. Our efforts should be guided by our obligations under international humanitarian law. We hope to make substantial progress later this autumn.

We are, however, still struggling to move forward on reaching agreement on a mandate to negotiate a new protocol dealing with the adverse humanitarian consequences of anti-vehicle mines. We also need to come to agreement on measures to ensure full compliance with CCW obligations. We have been deliberating on this subject for years. Now it is time to make the necessary compromises in order to agree on a credible mechanism.

The Mine Ban Treaty illustrates that Governments and civil society can successfully work together to overcome a severe humanitarian challenge. The Treaty has set a norm against the use of anti-personnel mines. The Treaty has contributed to saving thousands of lives. The Treaty has paved the way for more resources and cooperation for mine-clearance and assistance to mine victims. The Mine Ban Treaty has achieved impressive results, but much remains to be done. We must maintain our political and financial commitments to this Treaty.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The topic of conventional weapons, under consideration in the Committee today, is no less important than that of weapons of mass destruction for maintaining international peace and security. In recent years, statistics have indicated that during armed conflict it is precisely conventional weapons that cause tremendous suffering to civilians and combatants alike.

Because of the growing danger of the uncontrolled and illegal spread of conventional weapons, we support the international community's efforts to eliminate the humanitarian consequences of their use. During the past year, a great deal has been done to resolve the problem of the uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons, which cause the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people in regional conflicts.

We note the consensus outcome of the work of the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. It clearly defines the steps to be taken to prevent illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons. It is very important that the international community now has a practical draft instrument in the area of combating small arms and light weapons. Now, Member States must make effective use of it.

At the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, further ways and means of achieving those goals were outlined. As the next, very important stage on this issue, we are engaged in preparations for the holding in July 2006 of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action.

We support the draft resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, submitted by Japan. We are prepared to support and become a sponsor of draft decision A/C.1/60/L.55, submitted by Switzerland, by which the General Assembly would adopt the draft instrument proposed by the Open-ended Working Group on marking and tracing.

We believe that there is an unprecedentedly grave problem of controlling weapons like man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS). In the hands of terrorists, such weapons would pose a direct threat to civil aviation. We have been actively working on the

problem of MANPADS with our partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In December 2004, the CIS proposed ways and means for exchanging information on the acquisition, sale and transfer of those weapons.

The Russian Federation shares the concern of the international community regarding the serious humanitarian consequences of the use of anti-personnel mines. We believe we must rid the world of those weapons. A specific contribution of the Russian Federation towards achieving that goal was its 2004 ratification of Protocol II of the Convention on Conventional Weapons.

In principle, we do not reject the idea of becoming a party to the Convention on the complete elimination of landmines at a reasonable time in the future. But, in reality, that can be done only when we are certain of our capacity to fulfil our obligations, and for that to occur we must first resolve a number of military, technical, economic and financial problems.

Concerning our concrete contribution to demining and mine disarmament, the Russian Federation has done much to reduce the stocks of such weapons and munitions. Over the last few years, we have eliminated more than 6 million anti-personnel mines. We also have plans to destroy a further 10 million anti-personnel mines and stockpiles, making use of effective and environmentally safe technologies.

We would like to commend the Group of Governmental Experts in Geneva for its work on mines other than anti-personnel mines. We favour continued research in that regard. We believe that artificial haste in a matter directly related to maintaining the weapons-readiness of States would be counterproductive and undesirable.

We have begun the procedure for ratifying the amendments to article 1 of the CCW, which would make it applicable to non-international conflicts. We are embarking on similar work on Protocol V on the explosive remnants of war.

We would like to share our concern in connection with the situation that has arisen in the sphere of Europe-wide arms control. Through no fault of ours, the entry into force of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, as amended in 1999, has been dragging on for some years. Russia has done everything within its power to bring the adapted Treaty

into force with all possible speed, including by ratifying the agreement on adaptation of the Treaty in the summer of 2004. Now the ball is in the court of our Western partners. We do not intend to continue pretending that the 1990 version of the Treaty is functioning normally and that we are satisfied with it. If the current situation does not take a turn for the better, then clearly all of us who are parties to the Treaty face some very complicated negotiations about its future at the Third Review Conference, to be held in May of next year.

In conclusion, we would like to observe that the multilateral Treaty on Open Skies, developed with the active participation of the Russian Federation, represents a major step in strengthening trust and security. Together with the Treaty on Conventional Weapons in Europe and the Vienna Document 1999, the entry into force of the Treaty on Open Skies has virtually concluded the formation of a regime of transparency and trust in the conventional weapons sphere in the Euro-Atlantic space. We believe that this was an important contribution to implementation of the whole range of initiatives of Russian President Putin to guarantee security and strategic stability, including by enhancing the transparency of military activities.

The Russian delegation will be guided by the aforementioned considerations when we consider the draft resolutions before the Committee.

Mr. De Alba (Mexico) (spoke in Spanish): The Mexican delegation would like to make a few comments, particularly with regard to small arms and light weapons. We will also briefly touch upon anti-personnel landmines.

First, we wish to reaffirm the commitment of the Government of Mexico to making headway in the control of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and to ensuring that they become far less readily available. As many members are aware, Mexico has been promoting these topics both regionally and internationally. We have participated in the formulation of the major agreements on implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action. Here, as we said at the Second Biennial Meeting of States, there have been positive results, but these are far from sufficient.

I wish therefore to identify the areas in which we work should intensify our work with a view to ensuring a more meaningful Review Conference in 2006. We believe that the Conference should first and foremost

take into account the multidimensional nature of the issue of small arms and light weapons and should emphasize aspects related not only to disarmament but also to crime prevention, the reduction of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and the impact on development.

While those aspects have been actively addressed in various forums, they have not been brought together to strengthen the Programme of Action and its 2006 review. The Government of Mexico is of the view that it is crucial to make headway in combating the problem in the context of crime prevention and improved control over the trade in these weapons and over persons involved in such trade, with a view to preventing and combating this illicit trade.

We welcome the initiatives put forward at this session of the First Committee to broaden the focus of the Review Conference. A number of innovative draft resolutions have already been introduced which focus on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons vis-à-vis development, peace, security and human rights. We are among the sponsors of those draft resolutions. Attention is also being paid to issues such as the regulation of ammunition and explosives, which, unfortunately, do not figure in the recent draft instrument on marking and tracing.

We also welcome initiatives aimed at finding solutions to the issues of civilian possession and national regulations, because these not only have a negative impact on the civilian population in each and every State, but also very frequently have cross-border effects as well. We would also have liked to see some progress on illicit brokering, but unfortunately we see none. Last year, we agreed to establish a group of experts to study the topic; we found that entirely insufficient. We would have liked to be in a position to approve the establishment of an open-ended committee to negotiate a legally binding instrument. The option of a legally binding instrument and negotiations that could commence much sooner than stipulated in the resolution are topics that we think could be discussed at the 2006 Conference.

We also think that action in certain areas related to assistance to victims and survivors should be strengthened. We have been working in that connection and believe that these issues were not addressed in depth in the present Programme of Action. That is true also of the gender perspective, which has not been

addressed sufficiently, and is true as well of a central problem that remained outstanding at the end of the last-minute negotiations in this room: transactions with non-State actors.

These are some of the areas that the Mexican delegation will be emphasizing. We think that in the First Committee we should have somewhat more informal discussions than the present debate about how best to prepare for a successful outcome of the Conference and, first and foremost, how best to prepare for the meeting of the Preparatory Committee set for January.

We welcome efforts to strengthen the legal framework, but we must point out that, in the view of Mexico, some of these, specifically relating to the marking and tracing of weapons, are insufficient. In the course of negotiations we repeatedly emphasized the great importance of such an instrument being legally binding. Beyond that, we stressed that it was essential to retain the inclusion of the components involved — that is, ammunition; to include a major step on the specific topic of how weapons are to be marked; to abandon marking with symbols, which presented enormous difficulties in tracing; to limit the national security safeguards that some States had introduced in previous exercises; and to strengthen controls and marking, particularly at the time of exportation or importation. All of those elements were omitted in the final result.

We have a document that falls considerably short of the standards we reached in Vienna during the negotiations on the draft Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials, and that falls even shorter with regard to the standards that the States not only of Latin America, but of the entire Western Hemisphere gave us by adopting the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials.

Thus, while the delegation of Mexico recognizes that the draft political instrument now agreed upon is a step forward for the international community and for many States and that it may be a useful tool, we must state clearly that it does not meet the standards to which I just referred. Above all, this outcome should alert us to the fact that it is highly inadvisable to

continue to agree on texts on the basis of the lowest common denominator.

We believe that we are doing the United Nations and the international community no good when we adopt documents that fall so short. Just a few minutes ago, we listened to the representative of the Russian Federation speak about the Ottawa Convention and the possibility that Russia might soon become a State party. That is exactly what we seek: standards that we can aspire to once we have made legislative changes or have adopted relevant measures, but that constitute a higher threshold than the status quo. The status quo — the mere acknowledgement of a problem and the will to address it without concrete measures — does not help the Organization.

We point that out, moreover, in the light of the aforementioned negotiations on brokering and the need for binding instruments. Of course, for Mexico, it will be very important to be able, in due course, to begin negotiations on a binding instrument on the national regulation of civilian possession of small arms and light weapons.

I should like to conclude by referring briefly to the subject of anti-personnel landmines in order to reaffirm Mexico's support for efforts to achieve the universality of the Ottawa Convention and, of course, efforts aimed at the full implementation of the Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009, which was adopted recently at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention. We will continue to work to give the Convention a sense of attention to victims' needs. As indicated, in the context of victim assistance efforts, we will seek a way to continue to make a contribution, as we did when we developed a programme with the Government of Canada and the Pan-American Health Organization a few years ago.

Mr. Park In-kook (Republic of Korea): The pernicious effects of the misuse or illegal use of conventional weapons have been witnessed in national instability, regional conflict and terrorism. Conventional arms, if illegally, irresponsibly or recklessly used, can inflict harm and misery equal to those caused by weapons of mass destruction.

However, in sharp contrast to a lingering stalemate in the area of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), we are pleased to note that steady and remarkable progress has been made in the area of conventional arsenals. It is our earnest hope that the

valuable progress made in disarmament and non-proliferation related to conventional weapons will spread to the field of WMDs in the years to come.

The United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms identified the tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons as a key mechanism for national, regional and international efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in such weapons. My delegation is pleased to note that the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons successfully concluded its negotiations by adopting a draft international instrument. Although we are not completely satisfied with the outcome of the negotiations — particularly in connection with the draft instrument's lack of legal power and the exclusion of ammunition from that document — we are confident that the draft instrument will help to accelerate the global efforts to eliminate illicit small arms and light weapons. In that regard, we commend in particular Ambassador Thalmann, Chairman of the Working Group, for his dedication and leadership in bringing about the successful outcome of the negotiations.

We attach great importance to the next year's Review Conference on the Programme of Action. In our view, the Review Conference should remain a genuine forum for gaining insight based on experiences and lessons, and should redirect and reorient the global process on small arms and light weapons. That is why we look forward to a frank exchange of views and to lively and interactive discussions at the forthcoming Review Conference.

My delegation believes that the Working Group on Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines has entered a critical phase of its discussions on the work still to be carried out on the incidence and detectability of and restrictions on the use of such mines. Since the Group's most recent meeting, in March, it has been very encouraging to see the growing possibility of a broad convergence of views on a number of key principles for addressing the humanitarian risks caused by the irresponsible use of these mines. We believe that that progress is attributable largely to our collective efforts, including the Coordinator's excellent work to bridge differing views. It is our sincere hope that we can all recognize that the subject of mines other than anti-personnel mines is sufficiently ripe for a legally

binding instrument based on the guiding principle that a balance must be struck between humanitarian concerns and military considerations.

Concerning the issue of explosive remnants of war, it is urgent to ensure strict implementation of the generic preventive measures provided for in Protocol V to the Treaty on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), on explosive remnants of war. In the meantime, with respect to the issue of implementing the existing principles of international humanitarian law related to explosive remnants of war, we support the three-step approach suggested by the Coordinator.

My delegation would also like to recognize the tireless efforts of South Africa and the European Union to promote the implementation of the CCW and its Protocols. The Republic of Korea wishes to establish a credible compliance mechanism covering the entire Convention and its Protocols. We favour a straightforward compliance mechanism that is consistent with that provided for in amended Protocol II.

Mr. Freeman (United Kingdom): Mr. Chairman, I apologize for taking the floor, but it seems to me that we have had a rather interesting discussion this afternoon. Speaking for the European Union (EU) presidency, I am encouraged to engage interactively, which I think, Mr. Chairman, that you and others are always seeking to encourage.

I am encouraged to do so by the intervention earlier this afternoon by the representative of Japan. I listened carefully to Mr. Mine's remarks concerning the draft resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We respect and applaud the role Japan is playing and has played in advancing this very important agenda, in this forum and more generally.

Ambassador Mine acknowledged that a number of countries believe the draft resolution which Japan has sponsored could be made even better — even more useful — if some additional considerations were reflected; he touched upon some of these. I would like, if I may, just to respond to the points he made on the three examples he touched upon. The first concerned developing small arms and light weapons transfer controls within the United Nations Programme of Action. Ambassador Mine suggested that this might be taken to pre-judge the Programme of Action Review Conference if it were reflected in the draft resolution. I must say that we do not agree with that. A preambular

reference to this issue would, in our view, highlight ongoing work and point out an important issue for consideration next year.

As Ambassador Mine himself recalled, at the Biennial Meeting of States, earlier this year, transfer controls was a subject much discussed in interventions in the meeting and in side meetings. Indeed, we calculated at the time that something in excess of about 40 countries raised this or endorsed it in one way or another, in addition to the large number of members of the European Union and countries that align themselves with us on this issue.

The second point is that we also think that making a preambular reference of some kind to possible topics for discussion and consideration of the Preparatory Committee, without prejudice, I stress, to the eventual Review Conference agenda, would help in preparation for the meetings next year. Developing preparatory suggestions of this kind would help us to focus discussion and would allow us to make the best of the time available next year. With the Preparatory Committee only a small number of working weeks away, it is surely right to be starting to focus our thinking on key issues for discussion there.

Thirdly, and perhaps most important, I want to pick up on the remarks by Ambassador Mine concerning the group of governmental experts on brokering. We would like to do our best to point out the key issues for the planned expert group on brokering. Frankly, I do not agree with Ambassador Mine that the group should set its own agenda. We need to agree on the mandate for the group, just as the mandate for the Group of Governmental Experts on Tracing Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons said, *inter alia*, that it should "examine the feasibility of developing an international instrument to enable States to identify" (resolution 56/24 V, para. 10), *et cetera*. So, too, does it not make sense, among other possibilities — I would emphasize that this is not an exclusive focus — for the brokering group also to examine the feasibility of developing an international instrument in that regard?

If we are to respond as effectively as possible on the important issues of small arms and light weapons reflected in the draft resolution, there would, in our view, be added advantage, real additional benefit, to reflect the points we have previously raised with our Japanese friends and that they in turn, I am sure, have

raised with the other possible sponsors, and which I have raised again in my remarks this afternoon.

Mr. Draganov (Bulgaria): Mr. Chairman, since I am taking the floor for the first time, allow me to express my satisfaction in seeing you presiding over the work of the Committee. I am confident that your experience and strong personality will help the First Committee address the challenging issues on its agenda in a meaningful way.

Bulgaria aligned itself with the statement on conventional weapons made by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union (EU), so I will just make a few points of particular interest to my country.

Allow me, in this regard, to refer to the draft resolution to be presented by the representative of the Netherlands, entitled "National legislation on transfer of arms, military equipment and dual-use goods and technology" (A/C.1/60/L.35). My delegation remains convinced of the continued relevance of this draft resolution in the context of the First Committee agenda. Effective export control is essential in preventing proliferation activities and in maintaining international peace and security. We see this initiative also as a complementary effort to the measures envisaged in Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and thus as a further reinforcement of political commitment towards the establishment of effective export control norms in arms and dual-use goods and technologies.

As widely shared experience demonstrates, a sound export control system is dependent on the ability and political will of countries to adopt common norms and principles, and regional cooperation is of paramount importance. Led by this understanding, the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with the South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Bulgarian Centre for the Study of Democracy, organized a regional seminar called "Towards NATO and the EU: Effective export control legislation — lessons learned". The seminar was held in June of this year, and its objective was to share with the rest of the Stability Pact countries the experience Bulgaria has gained in reforming its export control system in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration.

The establishment of a viable national export control system in the area of arms and related goods

cannot have its aim fully achieved without proper regulation of brokering activities. In 2002, with amendments to our law on foreign trade activity in arms and dual-use goods and technologies, the licensing of brokering activities was introduced in Bulgaria. Licensing applies to both national and foreign physical and legal persons. In order for a company or a physical person to conduct brokering activities from and on the territory of the country, a license issued by the competent authorities is required, and it needs to be re-presented with the application for each and every transaction.

My statement is that the problem of illicit brokering activities should be tackled at the global level by ensuring the adoption internationally of common standards regulating intermediary activities. It is my expectation that our deliberations today will contribute to this endeavour.

Mr. Al-Anbaki (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I will briefly state the position of my country on two important issues: the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

My country attaches great importance to the issue of small arms and light weapons, particularly in the circumstances my country is now facing, involving the use by terrorist groups of many types of small arms and light weapons and the proliferation of the illicit trade in those arms, all of which seriously endangers the security of the country and its people. Iraq supports all regional and international efforts aimed at eradicating the illicit trade in those destructive small arms and light weapons.

My delegation believes that a large part of the responsibility for eradicating illicit trafficking lies with the countries that produce and export such weapons; they have the responsibility to end this dangerous scourge, which is prejudicial to the security of countries and peoples. This should lead all parties to seek a legally binding instrument to eliminate illicit trafficking. That is why we call for positive participation in the Review Conference to be held in June 2006. In that connection, we have participated in League of Arab States conferences on combating illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and in the Algiers regional conference on the implementation of

the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms, hosted by the fraternal Government of Algeria from 11 to 15 April 2005.

Iraq joins others in supporting commitment to and the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. That instrument has the humanitarian aim of eradicating the threat posed by mines and assisting the victims of those weapons. As members know, my country endures the danger of huge numbers of landmines and other remnants of war, which are the legacy of three decades of war and conflict. We therefore have an enormous interest in adhering to the Convention, which we are currently considering. At the end of 2003 we set up a national committee for mine affairs, with the authority to follow up the issue of demining in Iraq. My country sent a high-level observer delegation to the Nairobi Summit on a Mine-free World, held from 29 November to 3 December 2004, and participated in the work of the Standing Committees of the Mine Ban Convention, which met in Geneva from 13 to 17 June 2005.

Mr. Mine (Japan): I apologize for taking the floor for a second time on this issue, but this is an important opportunity to exchange views on significant items. I would like to thank Ambassador Freeman for giving us his comments on some of the points I mentioned in my previous statement.

I would just like to know if it would be possible to get some indication from other countries on the issues we have discussed, and particularly on the three points we addressed. Certainly, I understand that it is not possible to reach any definite conclusions at this meeting, because delegations are not always prepared and may not have received enough information beforehand. Obviously it would be somewhat difficult. But, if possible, I would like to get the reactions of other countries. I think that would be very helpful to further this exercise.

The Chairman: I propose that we now move to the introduction of draft resolutions and decisions.

I call on the representative of Switzerland to introduce a draft decision on "International instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons" (A/C.1/60/L.55).

Mr. Streuli (Switzerland): In its resolution 58/241 of 23 December 2003, the General Assembly, pursuant to the recommendation of the Group of Governmental Experts on Tracing Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, decided to establish an open-ended working group, to meet in three sessions of two weeks each, to negotiate an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. The Open-ended Working Group, chaired by my colleague, Ambassador Anton Thalmann, concluded its work on 17 June 2005. It was able to reach consensus on a draft international instrument of a political character, and it recommended that the draft instrument annexed to its report (A/60/88) be adopted by the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

Based on that recommendation, Switzerland is taking the floor today to introduce, on behalf of its 57 sponsors, draft decision A/C.1/60/L.55 entitled "International instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons".

The successful conclusion of the negotiations in June was an encouraging milestone in an otherwise rather bleak arms control and disarmament record, marked by recent failures and shortcomings. We therefore hope that a wide cross-regional sponsorship for the draft decision will emerge throughout the coming weeks.

The sole purpose of the decision is the adoption of the draft instrument by the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. Switzerland calls upon all States to adopt the draft instrument by consensus. That would not only reflect the consensus reached by the Open-ended Working Group, but also give a strong signal that all States feel politically bound to implement the instrument. The new draft instrument is the first international agreement negotiated within the framework of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and constitutes a significant step forward in the ongoing efforts to tackle the problems caused by the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons.

The Chairman: I now give the floor to the representative of Austria to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/60/L.56.

Ms. Auer (Austria): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/60/L.56, on implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. This year Austria is sponsoring the draft resolution together with 88 States from all regional groupings, and I am happy to announce that the list of sponsors continues to grow. Moreover, for the first time, all European Union member States are sponsoring this draft resolution.

The draft resolution aims to reflect recent developments relating to the Convention. Hence, in its preamble and in operative paragraph 3, the draft resolution highlights the importance of the Nairobi Summit on a mine-free world and the Nairobi Action Plan adopted there. It also contains provisions that will allow for the proper functioning of the Convention.

I would like to invite all States, once again, to become sponsors of this important draft resolution.

The Chairman: Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to give the floor to Mr. Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

Mr. Abe (Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs): I would like to invite delegates to open-ended informal consultations, on preparations for the 2006 Conference to Review Progress in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The consultations will be held on Wednesday, 19 October, at 3.30 p.m. The venue will be announced next week. The consultations are for Member States only and is intended to check the state of preparedness for the January preparatory meeting and the Review Conference to be held in June and July, as well as to elicit any preliminary views of Member States on those preparations.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.